Direct flight from Nanded to Delhi and Amritsar

2590. SARDAR TARLOCHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a demand to have a flight of Indian Airlines to Nanded in Maharashtra from Amritsar and Delhi;

(b) whether Government could consider extending Delhi-Aurangabad flight to Nanded;

(c) what is the present air connectivity from Mumbai to Nanded; and

(d) whether Government would give priority to this historic religious destination?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Suggestions have been received in the past from various dignitaries/VIPs to introduce air services between Nanded and Amritsar/Delhi.

(b) The extension of Air India's daily services on the Delhi-Mumbai-Aurangabad route to Nanded would involve many stops and change in the timings of the flight, resulting in timings less preferred by the passengers. Moreover, study as to the number of passenger demand is yet to be estimated.

(c) Kingfisher Airlines is operating scheduled air services on the sector Mumbai-Nanded-Latur-Mumbai (thrice in a week).

(d) Air India had operated 7 services during 29.10.2008 to 4.11.2008 on the Amritsar-Delhi-Nanded & v.v. route to enable the pilgrims to travel to/from Nanded to attend the tricentenary celebrations. However, Air India does not have any plans to introduce regular scheduled air services to/from Nanded. Nevertheless, Domestic airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of the route dispersal guidelines issued by the Government and depending upon the traffic demand and their own commercial viability.

Selling of land by AAI in Mumbai

2591. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has given permission to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and the private company, MIAL, to sell away 200 acres of land in the western part of Mumbai recently;

(b) what are the reasons for selling away this land at this juncture;

(c) whether Government would get a major share from the sale proceeds if the land is sold;

(d) if so, the details of this deal;

(e) whether land of such value can be transferred in this manner for the benefit of private shareholders and private beneficiaries; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (f) Do not arise.

Overhead costs of Air India

2592. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Air India (AI) has the highest monthly expenditure of Rs.1750 crores which is very high when compared to other private airlines;

(b) whether it is also a fact that 30 per cent of Air India flights are filled with its employees whom Air India is giving complementary passes;

(c) what are the other benefits given to the employees of Air India; and

(d) how Air India is planning bring down its overhead costs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The average monthly expenditure of Air India before Depreciation and obsolescence is approximately Rs.1500 crores.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The facilities being presently provided to the employees of Air India are medical benefits for self and family, subsidized canteen facilities, staff housing colonies/company lease, Community Centre, Holiday Homes, Long Service mementos, Passages and subsidized transport facility.

Similarly, the employees are provided the facilities of free passages, medical benefits for self and family, use of holiday Homes after retirement.

(d) Initiatives undertaken to bring down the overhead costs include rationalization of routes, and of future aircraft deliveries, return of leased aircraft, rationalization of manpower costs and reduction of contractual employment, establishment of International Advisory Board, reconstitution of Board and senior management, constitution of a turnaround committee to took at all areas of cost reduction, closure of offline offices and reduction of employees at foreign stations.

Linking of airports in Punjab

2593. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to link big airport in Punjab with minor civil airports and defence airports and strips to facilitate air travel in the State;

(b) if so, whether the State Government is required to provide infrastructure and other facilities for the purpose; and

(c) the present status of the arrangement proposed to be made by the Centre with the assistance of the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation